

ENGAGEMENT WITH BURMA AND THE 2010 ELECTIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today on the floor of the Senate to discuss events involving the troubled country of Burma.

Earlier this year, I encouraged Secretary of State Clinton to make Burma a priority and to see how the United States could better achieve its policy objectives toward the regime. Several weeks ago, the administration unveiled its review of existing Burma policy. The result is that the administration has undertaken a diplomatic effort with the State Peace and Development Council, SPDC, in pursuit of the fundamental U.S. goals of peace, democracy and reconciliation in Burma.

Let me say that I wish the administration well with its diplomatic efforts. I am hopeful this policy will meet with some success. In addition, I believe that this interaction should not be limited to talks merely with the SPDC but should also include discussions with the National League for Democracy, NLD, and representatives from Burma's ethnic minorities. That said, I am not sanguine about the prospects for engagement with the regime. The military junta has shown no inclination whatsoever to compromise on any issue that might jeopardize the regime's hold on power. According to news reports, in July of this year, just weeks before the unveiling of the new Burma policy, the State Department at the highest levels offered to drop the U.S. investment ban against Burma if the regime released Aung San Suu Kyi. This was a major test of how the regime would respond to diplomatic engagement, providing a golden opportunity for the SPDC to demonstrate that it had indeed changed its spots. Instead of accepting this offer and freeing Suu Kyi, the regime promptly sentenced her to an additional 18 months of imprisonment. That does not augur well for diplomatic engagement.

As part of its new strategy, the administration indicated that, while it will place a high priority on diplomatic engagement, it will maintain the economic sanctions in place against the regime. It seems to me that, as matters now stand, there are three significant tests of whether or not the junta's relationship with the United States has improved to the degree that we should even consider moving away from a policy of sanctions: No. 1, the release of all political prisoners, including Suu Kyi; No. 2, the free and fair conduct of the 2010 elections; and No. 3, Burma's compliance with its international obligations to end any prohibited military or proliferation related cooperation with North Korea. Short of tangible and concrete progress in these areas, the removal of sanctions seems to make little sense. It is after all the most significant leverage our government has over the SPDC. Sanctions make clear that the military junta has not achieved legitimacy in the eyes of the West.

It is that search for international legitimacy that has apparently driven the SPDC to hold elections next year. But the 2010 elections are fraught with problems. As a preliminary matter, for these elections to be meaningful, the new "constitution" should be amended to provide for truly open electoral competition and democratic governance. As it stands now under the junta's charter, if Suu Kyi's party the NLD won 100 percent of the contestable parliamentary seats in next year's election it would still not control the key government ministries: Defence and Home Affairs. No matter what they will remain firmly under military control. Moreover, the NLD cannot amend the constitution to improve the charter because the military is guaranteed a quarter of the parliament's seats. That means the junta can block any constitutional change. Finally, Suu Kyi may not even hold a position in the government; she is excluded from office by the charter. I would say to my Senate colleagues, this is hardly a prescription for democratic governance.

But putting the flaws in the constitution to one side, there would need to be a profound change in the political environment in Burma for next year's elections to be meaningful. For example, candidates would need to be permitted to freely speak, assemble, and organize. So far as I can tell, none of that has occurred. There would also need to be international election monitors allowed in the country well in advance of election day. This was not permitted during the 2008 "referendum." Simply holding an election is not enough; the elections must pass muster.

With respect to next year's balloting, the NLD, the clear winner of the 1990 elections which the regime abrogated, faces a Hobson's choice. It can either participate in the elections which are almost certain to be unfair and thereby legitimize the flawed constitution or boycott the elections and be treated as a member of an unlawful organization. Participation means casting aside its 1990 victory; nonparticipation means becoming outlaws. I am likely to support the NLD in whatever decision the party makes in this regard though I am not blind to the profound dilemma it faces.

I would just close by paying special tribute to Aung San Suu Kyi. Her grace and courage are an inspiration not only to the people of Burma but to us all. Her imprisonment is a reminder of the paramount importance of the need for freedom and justice in her homeland. I want her to know that I stand with her in her efforts to bring freedom and reconciliation to the people of Burma.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DR. PAIGE BAKER

• Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to Dr. Paige Baker, super-

intendent of Badlands National Park. Dr. Baker is retiring from the National Park Service at the end of this year, and his leadership at the park will be greatly missed. I have enjoyed working with Dr. Baker in his capacity as superintendent and want to take this opportunity to recognize his dedication to public service.

Dr. Baker grew up on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in western North Dakota. Education has been a strong theme throughout his life, and his commitment to educating others is evident in his work at the Badlands. He attended college at the University of Mary in Bismarck and went on to earn both his master's and doctorate in education administration at Pennsylvania State University. Prior to joining the National Park Service, he worked at several universities and for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In 2004, he became superintendent of the Casa Grande Ruins National Monument in Arizona. In late 2005, Dr. Baker came to southwestern South Dakota to serve as superintendent of the Badlands National Park. The Baker family has been kind to the National Park Service and South Dakota; his brother Gerard Baker serves as superintendent of Mount Rushmore National Memorial.

At the Badlands, Dr. Baker has overseen the management of a unique and treasured landscape visited by more than a million people each year. Badlands National Park encompasses 244,000 acres of some of the most spectacular scenery in the world. The Badlands formations contain rich geology and paleontological resources, and the mixed-grass prairie within the park offers visitors from around the world the chance to view bison, bighorn sheep, and other wildlife. Dr. Baker's charismatic and respected leadership has no doubt had a positive impact on the experience of each visitor to the park.

The Badlands also have strong historical and spiritual significance to the Lakota people. Dr. Baker has expanded visitors' understanding of the Badlands through interpretation programs that recognize the cultural significance of the area. Among his most significant contributions, Dr. Baker has helped to improve relationships with tribes and bridge cultural divides. He has brought Native and non-Native students to the Badlands to learn from one another and find common ground. He has also fostered greater communication with tribes, particularly with regard to the South Unit of the Badlands that is currently comanaged with the Oglala Sioux Tribe. Dr. Baker has brought a level of understanding and respect to these multi-faceted issues that deserves recognition.

In closing, I thank Dr. Baker for his service at Badlands National Park and wish him all the best in his retirement. Dr. Baker's work at the Badlands will leave a lasting legacy, and I congratulate him on his accomplishments. •

RECOGNIZING IBEC CREATIVE

• Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, our Nation has long recognized that small businesses are the true innovators in our economy. Indeed, according to the U.S. Small Business Administration, our Nation's 27 million small firms generate a majority of the innovation coming from American businesses and produce 13 times more patents per employee than their larger counterparts. But to continue this trend, we need a new, younger generation of entrepreneurs to rise to the forefront and open their own small businesses. That is why I am proud to rise today to recognize the entrepreneurial spirit and ingenuity of a young woman from my home State of Maine whose graphic and Web design company is providing clients with, in her words, "fresh ideas that grow results."

iBec Creative was founded in 2006 by entrepreneur Becky Stockbridge. As a senior at the University of Southern Maine, Ms. Stockbridge wrote a business plan to start a Web and graphic design business for medical professionals. She realized that this critical segment of our economy was in desperate need of innovative and creative ways to promote their expertise, including through brochures, logos, and informational Web sites. With a \$4,200 grant from the Libra Future Fund, a Maine-based nonprofit organization that supports young entrepreneurs, as well as free office space awarded by the Maine Center for Enterprise Development, she embarked upon her fledgling entrepreneurial career. To overcome a slow start, Ms. Stockbridge soon began designing Web sites and graphic designs for small businesses in other fields and by seizing upon these additional opportunities, she greatly broadened her client base.

In her continued efforts to present clients with cutting-edge technology, Ms. Stockbridge's innovative assortment of development, design, and monitoring services have turned iBec Creative into a well-respected five-person small company with an expected \$350,000 in revenue for 2009. iBec currently specializes in providing a wide range of marketing and consulting services to its clients, such as Web design and search engine optimization, SEO, consulting, branding, internet marketing, traditional marketing, and project management. Additionally, iBec Creative utilizes emerging media to promote its clients various brands.

Ms. Stockbridge's creativity, vigor, and entrepreneurial commitment were recently recognized by BusinessWeek as she was named a 2009 finalist in the America's Best Young Entrepreneurs competition. She is the only person nominated from my home State of Maine and the first finalist from Maine since the contest began 5 years ago. Ms. Stockbridge is competing against 24 other young entrepreneurs from around the Nation in this unique online challenge, and I look forward to hearing about her successful outcome at the end of the competition.

iBec Creative is a remarkable small business whose story demonstrates how community involvement and encouragement can help entrepreneurs of all ages realize their aspirations and dreams. I commend Becky Stockbridge for her innovation and determination and wish Ms. Stockbridge and everyone at iBec Creative the best of luck with their burgeoning business.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 9:33 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2489. An act to authorize a national cooperative geospatial imagery program through the United States Geological Survey to promote use of remote sensing data.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 832. An act to amend title 36, United States Code, to grant a Federal charter to the Military Officers Association of America, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House disagrees to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2996) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes; it agrees to the conference asked by the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Messrs. DICKS, MORAN of Virginia, MOLLOHAN, CHANDLER, HINCHEY, OLVER, PASTOR, PRICE of North Carolina, OBEY, SIMPSON, CALVERT, LATOURETTE, COLE, and LEWIS of California as managers of the conference on the part of the House.

At 11:40 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, with an amendment, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

S. 1929. An act to provide for an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL AND JOINT RESOLUTION SIGNED

The President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD) reported that he had signed the following enrolled bill and joint resolution, which had previously been signed by the Speaker of the House:

H.R. 1209. An act to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in recognition and celebration of the establishment of the Medal of Honor in 1861, America's highest award for valor in action against an enemy force which can be bestowed upon an individual serving in the Armed Services of the United States, to honor the American military men and women who have been recipients of the Medal of Honor, and to promote awareness of what the Medal of Honor represents and how ordinary Americans, through courage, sacrifice, selfless service and patriotism, can challenge fate and change the course of history.

H.J. Res. 26. A joint resolution proclaiming Casimir Pulaski to be an honorary citizen of the United States posthumously.

At 6:12 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3632. An act to provide improvements for the operations of the Federal courts, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 1694. An act to allow the funding for the interoperable emergency communications grant program established under the Digital Television Transition and Public Safety Act of 2005 to remain available until expended through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 177. Concurrent resolution raising the awareness of the need for crime prevention in communities across the country and expressing support for designation of October 1, 2009, through October 3, 2009, as "Celebrate Safe Communities" Week, and October as "Crime Prevention Month".

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 3632. An act to provide improvements for the operations of the Federal courts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

The following concurrent resolution was read, and referred as indicated:

H. Con. Res. 177. Concurrent resolution raising the awareness of the need for crime prevention in communities across the country and expressing support for designation of October 1, 2009, through October 3, 2009, as "Celebrate Safe Communities" Week, and October as "Crime Prevention Month"; to the committee on the Judiciary.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

H.R. 3617. An act to provide an extension of Federal-aid highway, highway safety, motor